

A Night with the Dead.

A TALE OF HORROR.

Suddenly the double door of the place opened with a clang, and in walked the inspector of the dead house; and moving about among the corpses, he gave orders to four sturdy attendants that followed him concerning the removal of the bodies. I knew him, for I had met him on his mysterious errands in the dissecting-room in the college adjoining the dead-house, and with which it was connected. I felt a thrill of joy that I was in the presence of the living. I knew, also, that it was in the morning after my adventure in the street—perhaps eight hours later—for the inspector was now going his usual rounds. Would this deadly paralysis ever leave my body? The men were carrying out the bodies, hurrying them away on biers. My fate was suspended by a hair. A motion, a groan might attract their attention. How I strained and strove with the insane energy of will to bring into action my dormant powers! The inspector came my way. I saw him glance at me, and give an order to a man close by. He was turning away. He spoke to an attendant, and then disappeared through the door he had entered at. Oh, for a moment's lease of voice, of sinew, and of muscle! How soon would I cross the narrow, covered walk between where I lay and the yard of the medical building—rejoin my fellows, and swallow greedily some antidote for the deadly poison that had left me a soul without a frame?

One by one the corpse disappeared through the doorway, borne by the same men whose office it was to fetch the morning victims for the dissecting-room. Soon all were gone but two—lying in the further apartment—ghastly specimens. My turn was next.—Was I, then, after all, to follow the train of the city's outcast, and be cast, with a dozen others, living into the over-crowded grave? The men approached me. They lifted me, and I was on a bier. They raised me, and I was carried, not after the others, but to the rear of the apartment. Another door was thrown open, and I entered a dark room, the atmosphere dark and fetid.

In an instant I knew the place; for I had been on a previous occasion privileged with a peep at the secret mysteries of the Medical University. Great Heavens! They were bringing me to the keeping-room, where the 'subjects' were left till sufficiently decayed for the purpose of dissecting, and where doors were open to mortal tread only at intervals of days.

The men sat down my bier, then brought in the two remaining bodies, and left, double-barring the inner door, and banging the two outer ones behind them. I was alone.

I know not how much longer I lay in this half-life condition. It may have been hours. At length, a change crept over me. My brain seemed to lose its vivid force. The dreary sense passed away. I was conscious of slowly returning physical power.—My sensations became more natural, and at length the breath seemed to swell in my chest, and start once more in my lungs. My breast heaved. A few more inspirations of air, and the blood started and pulsed in my veins and heart, warming and quickening my returning life as it flowed. I never shall forget the peculiar, delightful sensation imparted through my whole system by the awakening life-current as it now penetrated the remotest corners of my frame. It seemed as though my physical life had commenced from the very point where it had been arrested by the vaporous poison, and I awoke with the same freshness and vitality of eight hours. Presently, a muscle relaxed involuntarily. In another moment my limbs acknowledged the supremacy of will, and I sat up, the change in my feelings seemed wonderful. Now I was a man.

The place now assumed its real character to my natural reason. It was a close, low room, with only a few rays of light streaming from a sash in the ceiling, upon a row of biers in the centre of the floor. On one of these I was sitting. On my left, near the door where I had been brought in, lay the bodies—my recent companions in the dead-room—and that had been brought in with me. On the right was a long row, ghastly, horrid and offensive, of human forms and skeletons, yet enclosed in flesh. Toward the further end of the row, and near what I knew to be the door of exit, were the corpse first placed that had remained longest, and were many of them in that loathsome state of putrefaction and decay rendered necessary in order to successful dissections for certain purposes. The apartment was kept warm, in order to accelerate decomposition; and a foul, sickening smell

filled the air, while steaming odors evaporated from the bodies.

For an instant my blood curdled in its new-found course, and I gazed distractedly on the glaring horrors around me. With a cold shudder I moved off the bier, and stood upon the stone floor, contrasting the icy coldness with the warm vapors of the atmosphere. I unwound the tight binding of my death robe, and, hardly knowing what I did, crawled to a remote corner, and striving to shut out the fearful sight, crouched alone. But the horrid dead eyes would stare at me from their sockets, though I covered my face with my winding sheet which still enveloped my body—my only protection. A cold sweat streamed from every pore, and the heavy air stifled my lungs, as I thought how long it might be ere the doors of this chamber of death would again be opened.

It seemed hardly an hour that I remained thus, when the light that stole through the window in the low roof, grew gradually less and less, till all objects became dim to my vision. The night was coming on. I knew that the night must be spent in this place—but knew not how many more.—Sleep began to steal over my frame; for the experiences of the last few hours had made havoc with my powers of physical endurance. I knew it would be unwise to remain longer on the cold, damp floor; for already chills began to alternate through my overheated body. But the thought of sleeping beside the dead! Necessity knows no delicacies—no law. I rose, overturned my bier upon the floor, and gathering the sheet around me, stretched my limbs on its under side, and was soon asleep.

I awoke long afterwards. My slumber had been fitful, and crowded with horrid dreams and frightful spectres. The moon was shining, though dimly, through the narrow sash in the ceiling, its rays adding yet more startling ghostliness to the scene it illuminated. Then I knew it was far into the night. The old German city slept. The citizens—the noble—royal—all were quiet under the sole surveillance of the stars and the solitary night watchman. I slept again. In the horrid dream, I screamed outright, and threw my arms wildly about me, striking the edge of the nearest bier, and upsetting it. The occupant came tumbling down upon the floor, one stiff arm supporting the body in a half sitting position, and the other falling with rigid palm on my breast, while the frightful, disordered countenance beamed directly over my face, within six inches, and its glossy eyeballs, gleaming with a prospect of light, glared into mine. Horror ten times more horrible froze my blood, and it was long before I could summon resolution to act. With a yell of terror that echoed dead against the close walls, I sprang up, pushing the body from me, fleeing, as it fell back with a dull sound, to the corner, and hid my face in my robe of death, shaking from head to foot.

I need not relate how morning came again. How, as time advanced, hunger gnawed my vitals. How I raved and yelled, and fruitlessly tried to force the heavy doors of the place.—How a little mouse nibbled near, and brought crumbs and sweetmeats through his hole, which I pounced upon; and when the tiny creature saw that his supper was gone, it ran back for more. How another night came. How I raved with thirst. How morning came again, daylight still lighting up the same awful scene. How, at length nature could endure it no more. I fainted, and lay cold and still again.

I awoke gradually from the faint.—My eyes were opened with a glassy, death-stare, and I knew I was being carried on a bier across the court yard that separated the dead-house from the college. I tried to move, but was not able, and I was wound tightly in the sheet. At last I stopped. A door opened and shut behind me. I was in the dissecting room. The two men sat down my bier, disrobed me, and while I was yet barely conscious, and incapable of reaction, threw me heavily at full length on the table, letting my head hang painfully over the edge.

My position was unfavorable to resuscitation, but I knew, when a moment after, the medical professors entered, followed by a noisy crowd of students, my brother among them.—One of the professors, whom I recognized, approached the table, while the students took their seats to witness the performance. The professor I knew had a peculiar dislike to look upon the features of a corpse till after the first thrust of the knife. He was already wetting this instrument. What if, after all, I'd been snatched from a living death only to be butchered alive? He turned toward me. With a fearful effort I managed to raise my head from its unnatural position. He stepped back in fright. The attention of the students was attracted to the spot, many of whom recognized my countenance at once.

Reader, imagine, if you can, a meet-

ing under circumstances like these, between two brothers, or my fellow students' horror, and you will picture better than I can, the curious scene.

ARTHEMUS WARD'S LAST.—The following is said to have been the last thing written by Artemus Ward:—'Until quite recent I've been a healthy individual. I'm nearly sixty, and yet I've got a muscle into my arm which don't make my fists resemble the tread of a canary bird when they fly out and hit a man. Only a few weeks ago I was exhibitin' in East Showboyan, in a bildin' which had been formerly occupied by a pugilist—one of the fellers what hits from the shoulder, and taught the manly art of self-defence. And he cum and sed he was goin' in 'fco in consequence of prev'ly 'ockeying sed buildin' with a large yellor dog. He sed, 'do you want to be ground to powder?' I sed, 'Yes, I do, if there is a powder grindist handy,' when he struck me a disgustin' blow in my left eye, which caused that concern to close at once for repairs; but he didn't hurt me any more. I went for him energetically. His parents lived near by, and I will simply state that fifteen minutes after I had gone for him, his mother sevin' the prostrate form of her son approachin' the house on a shutter, carried by four men, run out doors, keerfully looked him over and sed, 'My son, you have been foolin' round a thrashin' masheen. You went in at the end where they put the grain in, and came out with the straw, and then got up in the thingunagin and let the horses trod on you, didn't you my son?' You can imagine by this what a disagreeable person I am when I'm angry.'

A BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM IN 1770.—The following description of a couple on their wedding day, in 1770, is amusing and interesting: To begin with the lady. Her locks were strained upwards over an immense cushion that sat like an incubus on her head, and plastered over with pomatum, and then sprinkled with a shower of white powder. The height of this tower was somewhat over a foot. One single white rose-bud lay on its top, like an eagle on a hay stack. Over her neck and bosom was folded a lace handkerchief, fastened in front with a bosom-pin rather larger than a copper cent, containing her grandfather's miniature set in virgin gold. Her airy form was braided up in a satin dress, the sleeves as tight as the natural skin of her arm, with a waist formed by a bodice, worn outside, whence the skirt flowed off, and was distended at the top by an ample hoop. Shoes of white kid, with peaked toes, and heels of two or three inches elevation, enclosed her feet and glittered with spangles as her little pedal members peeped curiously out. Now for the swain. His hair was sleeked back and plentifully beflowed, while his queue projected like a handle to a skillet. His coat was a sky-blue silk, lined with fellew; his long vest of satin, embroidered with gold lace; his breeches of the same material, and tied at the knees with pink ribbons.—White silk stockings and pumps, with laces and ties of the same hue, completed the habiliments of his nether limbs. Lace ruffles cluster around the waist, and a portentous frill work in correspondence, and bearing the miniature of his beloved, finished his truly genteel appearance.

A STAPLE PRODUCTION.—A full grown Buckeye, in rather an obnoxious and bawny state, tumbled into a stage-coach, one bright morning, beside a traveler who was in pursuit of knowledge, certainly at that time, "under difficulties." After the ribbons had been picked up, and the horses received notice to start, the traveler remarked that Ohio was a fine country. 'T-hic—aint nothing else,' hicoughed the Buckeye. 'What is the staple production, sir?' 'Co-or-on.'

That's the kind. A spirited Minnesota girl dismissed her lover on learning that he gave her father a drink of whisky. That's the kind. If all the girls in the land would go and do likewise, our country would be cursed with fewer young men who, by their drinking habits, have ruined themselves, and may be the means of breaking many fond hearts. It is within the power of every woman, particularly every young and unmarried one, to wield a mighty influence on the side of right, and against the demoralizing and degrading usages of society, if she only so wills it; and she is not true to her own and the best interests of her race if she does not wield that influence. It is a question involving the happiness of millions, and no half way measures can meet the case. Prompt, decided, energetic action is called for. We recommend

the action of the Minnesota girl.—Girls, if your lovers love whisky so well that they will not give it up for love of you, then love yourselves so well that you will not love those who love whisky.

Take it Out in Trade.—A lathy looking fellow entered a down-east restaurant, and ordered a double stew of oysters. The man who kept the restaurant was a small, red-headed individual, evidently high tempered. He prepared the stew in quick time, and the lathy fellow sat down to his repast, and ate with enviable relish, after which he selected a first class cigar, regaled himself with a mug of foaming ale, sitting with his feet elevated upon the top of the stove. He was very deliberate and self-possessed. After the cigar had almost disappeared in smoke, he called for his bill.

'Sixty-five cents,' said the proprietor. 'How is this?' asked the lath. 'Fifty cents for the double stew, and fifteen cents for the cigar.' 'You forgot the ale,' remarked the lathy fellow, looking quite serious. 'Ah, yes, that is ten cents more—seventy-five cents.' 'Well, I am ready to pay it.' The red-headed man made no reply, and the fellow kept his seat. 'I tell you I am ready to pay my bill.' 'Well, pay it then,' said the proprietor. 'I ain't got any money.' 'Hain't got any money,' repeated the man of refreshments. 'Not a darn'd cent.' The red-headed man opened his eyes. 'Then how do you expect to pay the bill?' 'Well, I'll tell you—I'll stand about seventy-five cents worth of your jaw—so go ahead.'

The red-headed man was the maddest individual ever seen. He seized the nut-cracker and let it fly at the offender with a will; but it only hit the chair back and broke its own handle. The lathy fellow had gone. He vacated his seat at the nick of time, and the last seen of him, he was walking leisurely down the street, finishing his cigar.

Keeping Secrets.—A good way to keep a secret is to keep it to yourself. If you tell one you might as well tell everybody.—The following is related of Stuart, the celebrated painter, which illustrates finely the power which a secret has to propagate itself, if once allowed a little airing, and to reach a few ears. Stuart had, as he supposed, discovered a secret art of coloring—very valuable. He told it to a friend. His friend valued it very highly, and came a time afterward to ask permission to communicate it, under the oath of eternal secrecy, to a friend of his who needed every possible aid to enable him to rise.

'Let me see,' said Stuart, making a chalk mark on a board at hand, 'I know the art, and that is—' 'One,' said his friend. 'You know it,' said Stuart, making another mark by the side of the mark already made, 'and that is—' 'Two,' cried the other. 'Well, you tell it to your friend, and that will be—making a third mark—' 'Three only,' said the other. 'No,' said Stuart, 'it is one hundred and eleven' (111.)

An Indiana girl who had been loving a fellow 'not wisely but too well,' and fearing her mother would find out what was the matter, rode twenty miles, with a revolver in her hand, to where the fellow was chopping in the woods and told him that if he didn't marry her she would make a tunnel through him. The wedding came off that afternoon. He said that he would never quarrel with a woman about a little thing like that.

'Whar is Europe to America?' said a stump orator, 'Nowhar! Where is England? Nowhar! They call England the mistress of the sea; but what makes the sea? the Mississippi! and all we've got to do is to turn the Mississippi into the Mammoth Cave, and the English navy will be floundering in the mud.'

A Cincinnati woman, named Slaughtmyer, is censured for jumping out of a fourth story window to escape her husband, who wanted to pet her. He wanted to pet her with a hatchet, as was his usual custom. A man can't take any comfort with such a woman as that.

'The arrangements of nature are admirable,' exclaimed a pretty belle during the late high wind. 'The same wind which disarranges our crinoline, blows dust in the eyes of the wicked young men who would take advantage of our confusion.' Philosophical young lady that!

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